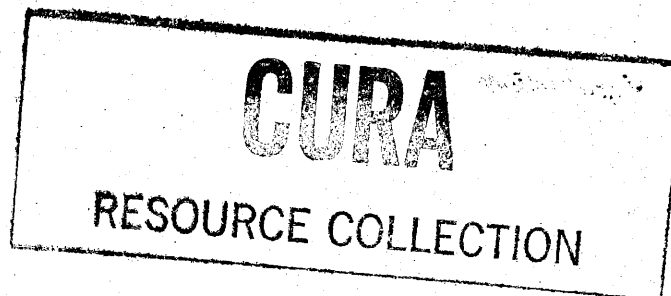


Office of Social Services Training Projects
Center for Urban and Regional Affairs
University of Minnesota



AN ASSESSMENT OF CHILD WELFARE TRAINING NEEDS

*A Study for the Office of Staff Development
State Department of Public Welfare
Minnesota*

Final Report

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Introduction

This project was directed to assess the training needs of staffs in county welfare departments that are primarily engaged in child welfare activities.(1) In a four-month period, September 1976 through December 1976, data was gathered in consultation with the State Department of Public Welfare training staff, advisory groups, and selected representatives of directors, supervisors and line staff.

The study is intended to assist the Department of Public Welfare in its responsibility to provide and stimulate training activities that are accessible, flexible, appropriate and soundly based.

With the introduction of Title XX and its emphasis on local development of social service plans and accountability, the spotlight is focused on the competence of county welfare staffs to deliver the critical and mandated services that are traditionally considered "child welfare" - adoption, child care, foster care, protection, and residential treatment. Associated services dealing with a primary goal of Title XX, "preserving, rehabilitating, or reuniting families", extend the responsibilities of county welfare staffs in providing services to children and their families. Indeed, it is estimated that 75% of social service caseloads are primarily concerned with child welfare issues.

Training programs and activities that can extend the capabilities of staff and provide for their developmental growth have assumed increased importance.

Expenditures for training have reached a significant amount. It is estimated that almost \$1,000,000 was spent in fiscal year 1975-76, by county welfare staffs for training purposes.(2)

This report was prepared in the context of state planning which is formulating new structures for integrating human services. The distinctive attributes and characteristics of training for this new approach are yet to be developed.

Nevertheless, this specialized report on the training needs of one aspect of the human services will, we hope, make a contribution to the larger issues, especially since its focus is to determine a more effective use of available resources.

(1) Note that the study excluded the three urban counties in Minnesota: Hennepin, Ramsey and St. Louis. Their size and resources for training enable them to proceed, somewhat independently, to develop their own training programs.

(2) This figure was supplied by the Office of Staff Development, Department of Public Welfare, on December 17, 1976.

Findings

1. Resources within the counties vary widely.
 - a. More than half the counties (53) have 5 or less workers.
 - b. Out of 149 workers in the above counties, only 4 are MSW's.
 - c. Worker strength in counties is a factor in the use of training opportunities. Coverage and time away from the agency are critical issues here.
2. Data for comprehensive planning and evaluation is missing.
 - a. An estimate of case loads per worker is not available.
 - b. A clear accounting of training budgets is missing.
 - c. Reports on the participation of workers in DPW staff development offerings is not readily accessible.
3. Expectations of the role of each component in a training system is not clearly understood, i.e.: in-service training, supervision, regional and multi-county offerings, and State DPW staff development.
4. Gaps in training are widespread in child welfare activities: child development knowledge, skills in direct work with children and adolescents, direct work with neglecting and abusing parents, family treatment.
5. A series of slide/tapes, "If the Bough Breaks", prepared by the Minnesota Child Welfare Training Project, are highly recommended for foster parent training, beginning worker in-service training, and community education. Counties expressed the need to have these materials available on a county basis for flexible training uses.
6. Standardized orientation of new workers to the county welfare system is notably lacking.
7. New workers do not always have a basic knowledge of the helping process. The assumption that the merit system is a screening device for assuring that beginning workers will have this minimum competence must be re-examined.
8. Eligibility technicians are particularly in need of training in understanding the welfare system. Some basic concepts in the helping process and basic interviewing skills were also identified as a gap in their training.
9. Training opportunities are intermittent, scattered and episodic, discouraging a rational progression of training for meeting staff development goals.
10. There is a cumulative effect in the use of training opportunities, i.e., the more training one is exposed to, the more training opportunities are sought. In the discussion of the slide/tapes, those staffs which had

a reasonable experience in using other training opportunities responded creatively and energetically to their value and flexible potential. The converse was also true.

11. Accessibility to audio/visual training materials, equipment, and someone knowledgeable in running equipment determines their use for in-service training purposes.
12. The role of the county commissioners, directors and supervisors in facilitating or inhibiting training is unclear but frequently mentioned as critical.
13. There is widely held agreement that training needs must be assessed at the local level, although leadership for initiating requests and program planning appears uneven and sometimes in dispute.
14. There is widespread confusion on whether training is mandatory, optional, or "highly recommended", i.e., a clear policy on expectations of county responsibilities in providing training is lacking.
15. While supervisors are regarded as key persons in the training system, there are enormous disparities in their potential for assuming training roles.
16. There is currently no model of training that has been developed on a developmental basis.
17. The provision and use of training opportunities for social work staff is spread unevenly throughout the state.
 - a. The amount of money spent on training from county to county varies widely (see Appendix A)*. Although numbers of workers and training allocation is roughly related, enormous disparities exist from county to county in budgeting for training purposes. For example, in counties with 5 workers, training expenditures for a fiscal year ranged from \$1,752 to \$8,203.
 - b. There is a gross disparity in the use of the University of Minnesota's Continuing Education opportunities (see Appendix A)** from 3 workers in Region 1 to 63 workers in Region 7. Although proximity to source of training seems to be a factor, there is still disparity in the use of this training source.
 - c. Training resources of mental health centers are used unevenly throughout the state. Out of 24 centers, with 20 responding, two-thirds contributed in-service training to county welfare staffs; only one-fifth have offered workshops; more than half have offered consultations and some presentations on specific topics. One-third of the centers stated their intentions to contribute training in the near future to county welfare staffs.
 - d. Varying degrees of initiative have been assumed by regions, individual counties and multi-county groups for training. These appear to be scattered and fragmented. No consistent reporting on these activities is recorded.
 - e. Regional resources (colleges, mental health centers, state hospitals, etc. - see Appendix B) appear evenly distributed but unevenly used.

*See Column 4

**See Column 3

Recommendations

1. Develop a three-tier training structure with the following responsibilities and activities:

- A. County or multi-county responsibilities for in-service training related to orientation for new workers, staff meetings for internal business, program review and development, case consultation, and training foster parents, adoptive parents, child care providers and community education.

Resources needed:

- (1) Audio/visual materials and equipment
- (2) Resources in related systems (mental health centers, colleges, state hospitals)

- B. Regional Training Center responsible for the development and delivery of appropriate workshops, supervisors' training, training sessions for support personnel, and the development of long-term training plans for specialized needs of the region.

In addition, the regional center would catalog materials and training resources for county or multi-county use; offer evaluation information on training experiences; assist individuals in formulating long-term training plans; establish a roster of training resources within the region; coordinate training sessions with allied systems for human service training objectives.

Resources needed:

- (1) Half-time coordinator working with an advisory committee from the region
 - (2) Designated center for materials and equipment
- C. State training office responsible for technical assistance to counties, multi-county units and regions in establishing a format for reporting training plans; recording evaluation of training experiences; and training expenditures.

In addition, the state training office of DPW should update its central library of films and materials; assist regions in identifying funding sources for training; encourage coordinated training with allied systems; provide technical assistance to training coordinators in the regions for workshop formats and training session content.

In addition, the state office should review and monitor the regions' training plans to determine if they are consistent with the state's objectives for DPW.

In addition, the state office should stimulate projects to test the effectiveness of training.

Finally, the state should encourage some standardization of training by providing materials, format and guidelines for suggested areas such as: orientation to all new employees; Basic Concepts in the Helping Process; Understanding the Welfare System; Understanding Allied Systems.

2. The use of TV or radio should be explored in a demonstration program. A weekly or bi-weekly report from the Commissioner on such matters as regulations, program development, national issues, demonstration projects tested in the state and elsewhere to enable the county staffs and allied systems to receive a systematic flow of information in a system which is complex, changing and widely misunderstood and misinterpreted. The program should be on public TV, either early in the morning or late in the afternoon for maximum attention of the county's welfare staff.
3. Each social worker in the county should have an opportunity to work out with the supervisor or appropriate personnel a training plan at the beginning of the fiscal year with minimum and maximum hours set, objectives stated, and suggested methods of achieving these. These plans should be reviewed by the county and sent on to the Regional Training Coordinator to form the basis of the region's training plans. A final review and evaluation of the plan should occur at the end of the fiscal year.
4. Each county should allocate a budget for training and be apprised of the funding sources for these.
5. Each county or multi-county unit should review its needs for personnel with specialized training needs (chemical dependency, marital counseling, working with parents of handicapped children, etc.) and a long-term training plan to achieve competency in this specialization should be worked out with the Regional Training Coordinator and the assistance of the state office.
6. Required: A systematic review by the state, on a periodic basis, of all materials in the central library to weed out the obsolete and provide fresh, stimulating and contemporary films, audio/visual and written materials for regional and county use.
7. The state office should arrange for the development of new materials arising out of identified gaps in training. (See Findings)
8. A systematic vehicle (newsletter? periodic workshops?) should be established to provide an exchange on demonstration programs within the counties, innovations in program development and administration, and research findings that have a bearing on practice.
9. Public education materials for community use to explain the activities, programs, goals of a county welfare system should be developed. Materials should be in a format (with discussion guide) that is easily used, accessible and portable. A Public Relations Officer in the State Office of Staff Development should be appointed to develop these materials and give technical assistance to counties in community education efforts.

10. A Task Force should be appointed by the Office of Staff Development to assist the Merit System in a review of its selection process for social workers. Social Work departments of higher educational institutions should be represented on the Task Force.
11. A Task Force should be appointed to explore the structure for consortium training for those systems that interact in child welfare issues (welfare, corrections, court systems, health, education, developmental disability services).

Magnitude of the Problems in Child Welfare

Clearly, there is general agreement that social workers in the county welfare system are faced with the most difficult problems in the social work enterprise. Often they are the least prepared for the responsibility of the life-shaping decisions affecting children and families that form the environment of a working day in child welfare. In this context, training can be viewed not as a peripheral concern but as an essential part of a welfare system's activities.

Assessing the needs for training in child welfare inevitably focuses attention on staff and budget resources, supervision, policy and regulations, administrative decisions, program demands, and the dynamic context of children and families in crisis. Inevitably, questions of preparation, the responsibility of social work education are also raised. It is a seamless web.

Significant expenditures are allocated to services for families and children. It is estimated that 75% of a social worker's time in a county welfare agency is absorbed in child welfare services; out of a total state budget for social services amounting to \$105,464,214 in fiscal 1974-75, more than two-thirds of the total budget was expended on programs for families and children.(3) Further, we note that almost a million dollars was spent in training for the fiscal year 1975-76.(4)

Considering the magnitude of problems that affect children and families in these turbulent times of rapid social change, the search for more effective methods of providing child welfare services demands that we continually revamp our traditional services and, indeed, develop new ones.

Some discernible trends capture the need for a focus of training activities.

1) The need for preventive resources is sharply exposed in the increased costs of foster care. According to Minnesota Department of Public Welfare figures, foster care costs increased more during 1974-75, than in the preceding two years combined. Total foster care costs for Minnesota in 1974-75, exceeded \$25,280,000. This represents an overall 19% increase in foster care costs.(5) These figures are reflected in national trends as a recent Senate sub-committee study revealed.(6)

(3) The Minnesota Social Service Expenditures Annual Report, 1974-75, p. 1.

(4) Chart of County Staff Training Expenditures, October 1975, through June 1976. Received from the DPW Staff Development Office, December 17, 1976.

(5) Minnesota Department of Public Welfare, Information Bulletin No. 98, p. 5.

(6) "Foster Care and Adoptions: Some Key Policy Issues", prepared for the Sub-committee on Children and Youth of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, United States Senate. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. August 1975.

Added to these cost figures are questions of effectiveness. It is an inescapable conclusion that the heavy reliance on foster family care has failed to meet the expectations of social agencies and communities. A disappointing proportion of children are ever united with the parents and ever-growing numbers of children appear to remain for long periods in foster care and in a state of limbo which offers nothing but bleak and unrewarding prospects for reunion with families.(7)

Yet there has been a dramatic increase in foster homes over the past nine years in non-metropolitan counties. The rate of increase in outstate Minnesota is 81.3% compared to 18.7% for the metro counties.(8) (See also Appendix D)

2) There is available, now, scattered but significant documentation of the extent of emotional disturbances present in children receiving services from county welfare systems. Not only did the total number of children receiving foster care rise in 1974-75, but this increase reflected large increases in emotionally disturbed children. In Minnesota, expenditures for emotionally disturbed youngsters in foster care rose by 76.2% in 1974-75, with approximately 70% of these children concentrated in the metropolitan area.(9)

Children with personality behavior problems accounted for 20.2% of the children in short-term care.(10) Estimates of the number of children receiving services who appear to have some symptoms of psychological distress are difficult to grasp but nationwide, it has been estimated that 50% of the children in foster care and 20% of the children in short-term day care have emotional problems.

3) The critical social, personal, and familial issues reflected in the high incidence of divorce, the large number of single parent families, working parents requiring supplemental care for their children, drug-related and severe personality disorders of parents, compel the attention of large numbers of the family and children's service staffs.

• Trends in social service patterns show an ever-increasing number of workers active in social service cases.

In examining the state reports on services for children, one notes a sharp increase in the child social case load, especially for urban counties. In Minnesota, from March 1974, to March 1975, services increased from 19,048 to 30,758. The total rural case load also increased. Especially notable is the fact that this dramatic increase occurred with children living with their parents, but more particularly with children living with other relatives.(11) (See also Appendix E)

(7) Supra. "Foster Care and Adoptions: Some Key Policy Issues".

(8) Minnesota Department of Public Welfare, Foster Homes Annual Report, 1974-75, p. 1.

(9) Minnesota Department of Public Welfare, Information Bulletin No. 98, pp. 7 and 12.

(10) Minnesota Department of Public Welfare Annual Report, 1974-75, Children Under State Guardianship, p. 28.

(11) Minnesota Department of Public Welfare, Trends in Child Social Service Case Load, Five-Year Period, 1971-75, p. 3.

One urban county, Ramsey, notes that almost one out of two of its entire social service staff (comprised of 237 individuals) is absorbed in child welfare work. This figure from Minnesota can be multiplied 50 times to present a challenging, if not overwhelming national case for improving and expanding the capabilities of welfare staffs.

In summary, we are dealing with a situation of vastly increased pressures upon welfare agencies for child social services and programmatic efforts, and these absorb significant expenditures of both money and personnel.

It is apparent that front line workers need not only assistance in strengthening their own capability, especially in assessing the family's potential for preserving its integrity, but they also need to have a variety of resources at hand to reinforce, supplement and occasionally substitute for parental function where parents cannot perform fully themselves.

The effective implementation of Title XX in promoting the current priorities of the Social and Rehabilitation Service depends in large measure therefore on programs of education and training designed to augment traditional services through the continual upgrading of the knowledge and skills of line staff.

Sources of Data

In our objectives of exploring more effective ways of using training materials already prepared, uncovering the issues of unmet needs and exploring responses to these, we used two information-gathering methods:

- (a) collecting data on the audio/visual materials developed by the Minnesota Child Welfare Training Project(12) and
- (b) the use of informants, individually and in their natural groups, to gather data about needs, structure, resources, audio/visual possibilities in the training of county welfare social workers.

The testing of the audio/visual materials has been accomplished by asking a variety of groups to use one or more of the slide/tapes with one of our staff present for evaluation and assessment. Questionnaires and participant observations were used for evaluative purposes.

For purposes of this study, the slide/tapes have been shown to workers in 16 counties.(13) Ninety-nine social workers and allied staff representing six regions of the state participated.

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- (12) The Minnesota Child Welfare Training Project produced "If the Bough Breaks", a series of five slide/tapes to train child welfare and related workers. The presentations deal with developmental issues in children and families at risk (maternal deprivation, separation in child placement, and abuse and neglect).
 - (13) Workers from the following counties viewed the slide/tapes: Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Dakota, Hubbard, Isanti, Kanabec, Kittson, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Pine, Polk, Red Lake, and Roseau.

In addition, the slide/tapes were shown to foster care trainers in Dakota, Washington and Carver Counties, to selected groups of foster care parents, to groups of students, and to a variety of private social agency personnel concerned with child welfare activities.

Altogether, 15 interviews were conducted with individuals and representatives of advisory groups for an in-depth discussion of the issues in training within the environment of county welfare departments.

Data on the use of mental health centers in training was retrieved by a questionnaire in which 20 out of 24 responses were received.

A questionnaire on the use of TV as a media for training was conducted with a representative group of directors of county welfare agencies.

Data on the extent of expenditures, social service case loads, and number of social workers in agencies was retrieved from the reports on file in the State Department of Public Welfare. (See footnotes)

The Use of Prepared Audio/Visual Materials

Audio/visual materials which are prepared for the specific uses of county welfare and allied staffs are generally considered an extremely valuable resource for training. They are generally highly recommended because they are available for flexible use in a local area and are not dependent on either the resources of consultants or the expense and dislocation of training that might be available at a place distant from the county welfare agency.

In the 16 county agencies which participated in a review of the audio/visual materials, there was a high degree of positive response to the flexible uses, the content, and their availability for in-service training, and the ease with which they can be transported around the county for multiple uses. Five specific audiences were identified as being particularly relevant for these materials:

- (1) training of foster parents
- (2) line staff, including eligibility technicians, particularly with new workers with less than two years experience
- (3) adoptive parents
- (4) community education
- (5) use in allied systems such as school social work, court personnel, and public health nurses

These materials were considered to be excellent catalysts for discussion for the following issues: separation, abuse and neglect, developmental needs of children and parents, and specific techniques for working with children and neglecting parents.

There appears to be a strong recommendation that sets of audio/visual materials be available on a county or multi-county basis and that at least one person be designated as a technician in the use and upkeep of both the

equipment and the materials. Inasmuch as the cost of the equipment is likely to be under \$300.00, a recommendation should be seriously entertained that this amount should be allocated in training budgets by the counties.

Failing the dispersal of audio/visual materials in each or a multiple unit of counties, a central place for lodging materials and equipment should be designated within each region and these locations should be well-publicized to the entire county welfare staff. Recommendations were made that regional libraries, mental health centers, and Agricultural Extension offices might be useful designations.

We would note here that the slide/tapes are already rather extensively being used in foster care training in conjunction with the Child Welfare League training program and positive assessment has been made of this particular combination of training materials.

We note the pervasive recommendation for the use of these audio/visual materials in community education and the need for discussion guides to be developed for this particular purpose.

As was noted in a 1975 survey done by the Minnesota Social Service Association (MSSA), almost none of the rural counties have separate public information workers. The responsibility is usually tacked on to the job description of already overburdened social workers or supervisors. This would indicate the need to provide a format that is easily used for various public education situations (many of which were readily pointed out by the groups viewing the slides). It would certainly be helpful in the workers' attempts to meet the needs of their clients, if their image was one of being concerned, sensitive and helpful as opposed to being the mean watchdog who takes children away, and if the public could be more understanding of the needs of these multi-problem families as opposed to being critical and angry with them.

Reorganizing the Training Structures

In an exploration of the delivery of training, it was clear that three issues emerged consistently:

- 1) The constraints of the organizational setting. In this issue, there was a consistent set of observations that facilitating or inhibiting training opportunities for staff depended very heavily on the decisions and attitudes of the supervisors, the directors, and the commissioners, but it was unclear to line staff as to who really made the decisions. Further, in an agency with limited staff and high demands from case loads, the time and energy to devote to training which often is not perceived as being useful takes on a low priority. This perception plus a lack of easily available training resources often inhibit any genuine attempt at developing the capabilities of existing staff.

- 2) Skills and competencies for family therapy, working with emotionally disturbed children and adolescents, community development skills, understanding the development of new programmatic efforts in group homes, and alternatives to existing services were identified but, generally, no coherent training was available for staff development along these lines. Training is

never stabilized enough for any clear career development, i.e., there is no continuum in either the workshop courses or separate presentations that are somewhat presented in improvised ways throughout the working year. Training resources and plans which can be available closer to the counties' geographic location are considered important features.

3) The updating and refresher courses in supervision skills is also indicated as presently lacking. Organizationally, there is an unclear expectation on budget allocation, staff development plans, and supervisory responsibilities for training.

Out of the confusion of clearly established roles for in-service training, multi-county, regional and state department responsibilities, we have recommended a three-level plan. (See Recommendation #1.) In this regard, we urge the consideration of the Governor's Economic Region as the geographic boundary for organizing training on a regional basis. Future developments in integrating human services will probably seek coincidental lines with economic region boundaries. This does not preclude "natural area" consortia on a multi-county basis but for decentralizing materials, technical assistance and a rational organization of training resources, the regional boundaries are appropriate.

A Training Coordinator in each region with an advisory committee is recommended. On a half-time basis, the coordinator can assume a variety of planning efforts. The identification of selected staff throughout the region can supplement the use of outside consultants and build up an indigenous talent pool amongst the counties in a particular region.

The Use of Television

The use of mass media for training and communication has had little exploration in this state. (Family day care training used TV successfully in an earlier project.) The idea of a "Commissioner's Report", for information, in closed TV or on an open broadcast which would reach the public as well as welfare staffs was explored. It was especially appealing to those who sought a clearer understanding of programs, policies and regulations. Misunderstandings, it was observed, frequently appear in county welfare systems because basic information on policies is not widely shared. The times recommended were first thing in the morning or late afternoon.

The use of TV for specific training had minimal support.

It is our recommendation that a "Commissioner's Report" program on TV might be useful in providing information in a rapidly changing scene, unifying counties in common expectations, and clarifying the weight of regulations that falls on the welfare system. A technique for telephoning in questions, comments, etc., would be indispensable to a TV effort.

Identification of Training Resources

See Appendix B for the variety of training resources that exist in each region. To our knowledge, a systematic account of their capabilities for training have not been explored on a regional basis. Mental Health Centers appear to have the most viable relationship to county welfare staff, but the impression is one of an improvised set of exchanges.

Inasmuch as the field of social services is seriously fragmented and responsibilities from various agencies are interrelated and require the coordinated use of multiple agencies, it is our recommendation that the training resources of allied systems not be overlooked (school social work, corrections, income maintenance, public health). Indeed, wherever possible, representatives of allied systems should become part of the training experience.

The role of the Staff Development Office is recommended as, primarily, a source for technical assistance, monitoring, data gathering, establishing standards, a clearinghouse, evaluation, and stimulating new training materials. The ongoing task of identifying training gaps and suggesting responses and the provision of certain set standard materials (orientation to the welfare system and basic materials in the helping process) should be a clearly defined responsibility.

Inasmuch as there has been an expressed need (see, on file, survey on uses of technology in training) for an instructional package with video cassettes, this mode of training might be tested for its effectiveness.

Gaps in Training

The lack of an integrated continuous structure which would insure that all workers, from hiring on, would pursue a training program which met their individual professional needs is a gap of a serious dimension. Among items missing from this perspective is a clear definition of roles of the various components of the welfare system; a cataloguing of training resources available in allied systems on a county, multi-county or regional basis; an evaluation of training experiences; an expectation of performance levels for staff; tangible training plans for each staff person; a reporting system for both the training experiences and the expenditures on training.

The perspective of long-term and short-term training is notably lacking.

The need for individual training plans.

Many factors currently affect who gets training, from the individual worker's assertiveness re training needs to the geographical location of their agencies, to whimsical decisions about the apportionment of training funds, to content associated with staffing at a given time within the DPW Staff Development Unit.

A beginning worker who was both self- and supervisor-assessed at entry as having clearly defined training needs has no assurance that these needs will be met in any consistent progressive fashion. For example, a worker with clear gaps in a knowledge of child development might have the opportunity to attend an advanced workshop on foster care placement early in a work experience but be unable to use it fully because of a lack of base knowledge. Similarly, an experienced worker in a given time period might be offered only training content at a level below her needs. It seems clear that training opportunities must provide individualized progression for all workers in order to be optimally useful and to avoid wasted effort and expense.

There appears to be little "quality control" throughout the planned training offerings; although we would support an eclectic approach to selection of training resources, there seems to be inadequate scrutiny of the quality and appropriateness of training. For instance, we learned that adoption worker A is receiving extensive training in transactional analysis, when questions could be raised about the suitability of this method to the kind of enabling approach currently in use with adoptive applicants. This example, contrasted with a report we heard of new worker B sent out on a child abuse call within the first two hours of a first day at work, points up the haphazard preparation of workers in the delivery system.

Associated with this view is the need to consider a plan for career development that offers, on a selected basis, the opportunity for county welfare staff for sabbaticals, half-time work-study arrangements, etc., to pursue advanced degree work. The model of the Administration Grant Project currently in place with the State Department of Public Welfare should be reviewed as one model. Variations should be explored in conjunction with institutions of higher education for combinations of independent study and classroom work. (The model available to Hospital Administration is one interesting example of a career development opportunity for staff.)

The need for staff with specialized skills was persistently identified, although there were differences among staff at all levels as to whether or not a "generic" approach to training was essential for a welfare system where services deal with multi-faceted human situations that cut across lines of income deficiency and socio-psychological external and internal problems of a complex nature. The dilemma of providing staff with specialized skills in such areas as child abuse, family therapy, chemical dependency, etc., can perhaps only be solved for county welfare boards with small staff on a multi-county basis.

The need for a career development focus for supervisors was brought to our attention repeatedly. Individual training plans would be a rational response to a group who appear to represent a wide diversity of background, experience and competencies.

Gaps in training content.

The assumption that the Merit System selects individuals for social work roles that have basic knowledge in human growth and development and the helping process and have acquired the basic skill of interviewing needs to be re-examined.

Understanding of the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of children, accompanied by observation and assessment skills, should be part of the repertoire of every worker who presumes to deal with children in a helping relationship. Workers who deal with dysfunctional families need basic knowledge of family development and methods based on family treatment theories. Many specializations within the child welfare field (child abuse, older child adoption, group treatment, etc.) require this fundamental knowledge as a prerequisite.

Many workers expressed dismay over the temporary dropping of the training in helping process given by the DPW Staff Development Unit. Informants, however, noted that a relatively small number of workers were trained in the helping process even when the DPW course was available and expressed concern about the fact that the majority of workers have never been trained in this fundamental social work approach.

Of the many training needs we heard expressed, the most serious gaps appear to be in child development, family development, and the helping process, all three of which are, of course, foundations for subsequent training in specialized areas in the child welfare field.

Specific content areas that were consistently identified for training purposes include:

- 1) subsidized adoption: realities of placement with older children, working with adoptive parents and older children.
- 2) therapeutic intervention with young children. Especially noted was the need for content on emotionally disturbed youngsters.
- 3) working with adolescents.
- 4) working with abusing and neglecting parents.
- 5) working with colleagues in allied systems, particularly the court system.
- 6) the role of innovative "training for trainers", especially for specialized day care, homemakers, foster and adoptive parents.
- 7) treatment knowledge and resources for the chemically dependent.

The need for a preventive focus.

Although not specifically identified as a training need, there was a pervasive set of questions dealing with the constraints of the organization and the limited resources available for sound casework decisions. Lack of autonomy, a lack of community resources (alternatives to foster placement, alternatives to corrective facilities), and a lack of optimism in working in a crisis-laden environment threaded through informants' observations. Decisions based on available resources but not in the best interests of children and families were often alluded to.

The development of a preventive focus in child welfare is an urgent concern. The extent to which the county welfare system can begin to explore strategies for this, is beyond the purview of this study, but does need attention.

Some Concluding Observations

Introducing a basic re-examination of practices related to training is complex.

To what extent can a good data base be instituted?

Of particular concern and central to the issues discussed is the question of case load responsibility: To what extent is the allegation of overwork, overburden, and a general despair of time for training and effective casework realistic?

To what extent can the responsibilities of various human service agencies that are interrelated with child welfare be reflected in integrated training opportunities?

To what extent can the Office of Monitoring and Evaluation assist county welfare departments in identifying problems, suggesting new responses and linking these to technical assistance? (For example, can each county be stimulated to review its placement practices and share the outcomes of this review?)

To what extent are research findings in child welfare fed into the practice situation for review and response?

Finally, large scale organizations require an environment of innovation. We were impressed with the many dedicated workers and administrators who were committed to more effective service to children and families and the several experiments being carried out in the county welfare system. A way of sharing these for a sense of renewal and optimism could be an important feature of new directions in training.

Project Staff

ESTHER WATTENBERG, Coordinator, CURA
and Associate Professor, School of Social Work

RITA WARREN, Child Development Specialist, CURA

BARBARA GOVEDNIK, Teaching Assistant
School of Social Work, University of Minnesota

CAROL IU, Teaching Assistant
School of Social Work, University of Minnesota

BEVERLY GAUSE, Secretary, CURA

APPENDIX A

PROFILE OF ALLOCATION OF WORKERS, TRAINING EXPENDITURES
AND CASELOAD RESPONSIBILITY IN COUNTY WELFARE SYSTEMS

	Counties Represented	(1) Total # of SW	(2) SW by Class I II III			(3) SW Participating in Continuing Ed.	(4) Amount of \$ for Training	(5) Average \$ per Worker	(6) Average Caseload per Worker
REGION 1	Kittson	22	9	12	1	3	\$13,225.00	\$ 601.00	28
	Marshall								
	Norman								
	Pennington								
	Polk								
	Red Lake								
	Roseau								
REGION 2	Beltrami	24	6	17	1	2	\$45,363.00	\$ 1,890.00	41.5
	Clearwater								
	Hubbard								
	Lake of the Woods								
	Mahnomen								
REGION 3	Aitkin	39	4	29	6	10	\$40,729.00	\$ 1,044.00	21.5
	Carlton								
	Cook								
	Itasca								
	Koochiching								
	Lake								
REGION 4	Becker	34	14	20	-	31	\$25,194.00	\$ 741.00	55.6
	Clay								
	Douglas								
	Grant								
	Otter Tail								
	Pope								
	Stevens								
	Traverse								
	Wilkin								
REGION 5	Cass	41	9	26	5	18	\$49,949.00	\$ 1,218.00	43
	Crow Wing								
	Morrison								
	Todd								
	Wadena								

PROFILE (Cont.)

REGION 6

Counties Represented	(1) Total # of SW	(2) SW by Class I II III			(3) SW Participating in Continuing Ed.	(4) Amount of \$ for Training	(5) Average \$ per Worker	(6) Average Caseload per Worker
Big Stone Chippewa Kandiyohi Lac Qui Parle McLeod Meeker Renville Swift Yellow Medicine	41	12	29	-	27	\$24,307.00	\$ 593.00	34

REGION 7

Benton Chisago Isanti Kanabec Mille Lacs Pine Sherburne Stearns Wright	73	25	46	2	63	\$42,084.00	\$ 576.00	51
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REGION 8

Cottonwood Jackson Lincoln Lyon Murray Nobles Pipestone Redwood Rock	24	9	15	-	12	\$39,222.00	\$ 1,634.00	55
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REGION 9

Blue Earth Brown Faribault LeSueur Martin Nicollet Sibley Waseca Watsonwan	36	12	16	8	36	\$45,225.00	\$ 1,256.00	50.5
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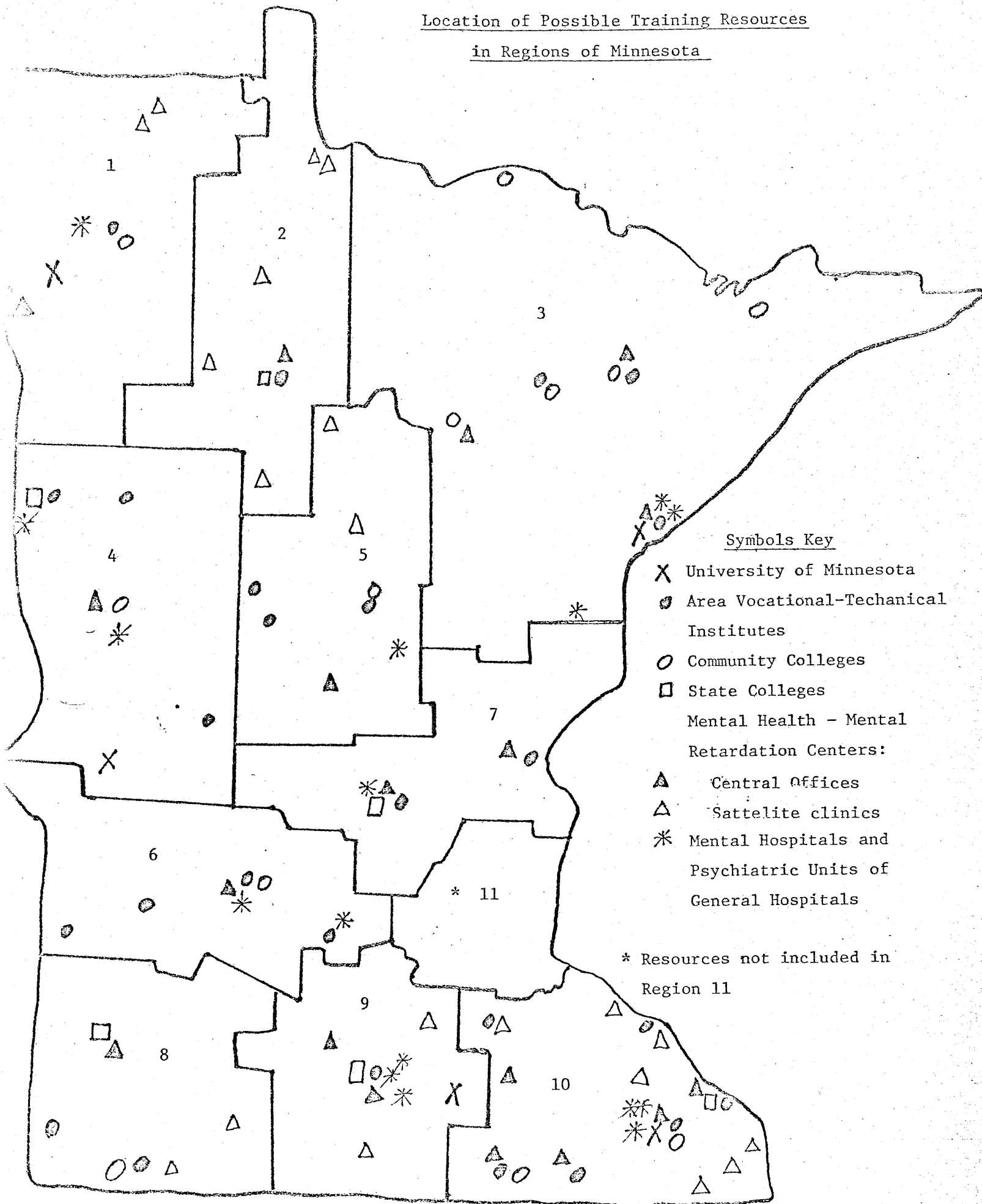
PROFILE (Cont.)

Counties Represented	(1) Total # of SW	(2) SW by Class			(3) SW Participating in Continuing Ed.	(4) Amount of \$ for Training	(5) Average \$ per Worker	(6) Average Caseload per Worker
		I	II	III				
Dodge	66	30	33	3	55	\$36,355.00	\$ 551.00	64
Fillmore								
Freeborn								
Goodhue								
Houston								
Mower								
Olmsted								
Rice								
Steele								
Wabasha								
Winona								

REGION 10

- SOURCES: (1)(2) -- DPW Merit System Computer Print-Out of County Welfare Department Personnel by Classification, June 1976.
- (3) -- Figures are from Registrant Lists of Continuing Education and Extension, Department of Conferences, University of Minnesota, June 1975, to June 1976.
- (4)(5) -- Chart of County Staff Training Expenditures, October 1975, through June 1976. Received from the DPW Staff Development Office, December 17, 1976.
- (6) -- Figures are public agency child social services caseloads, March 31, 1975. From DPW publication on Trends in Child Social Services Caseload, Five-Year Period, 1971-75.

Location of Possible Training Resources
in Regions of Minnesota



STAFF RESOURCES AND EXPENDITURES FOR TRAINING
OF COUNTY WELFARE DEPARTMENTS*

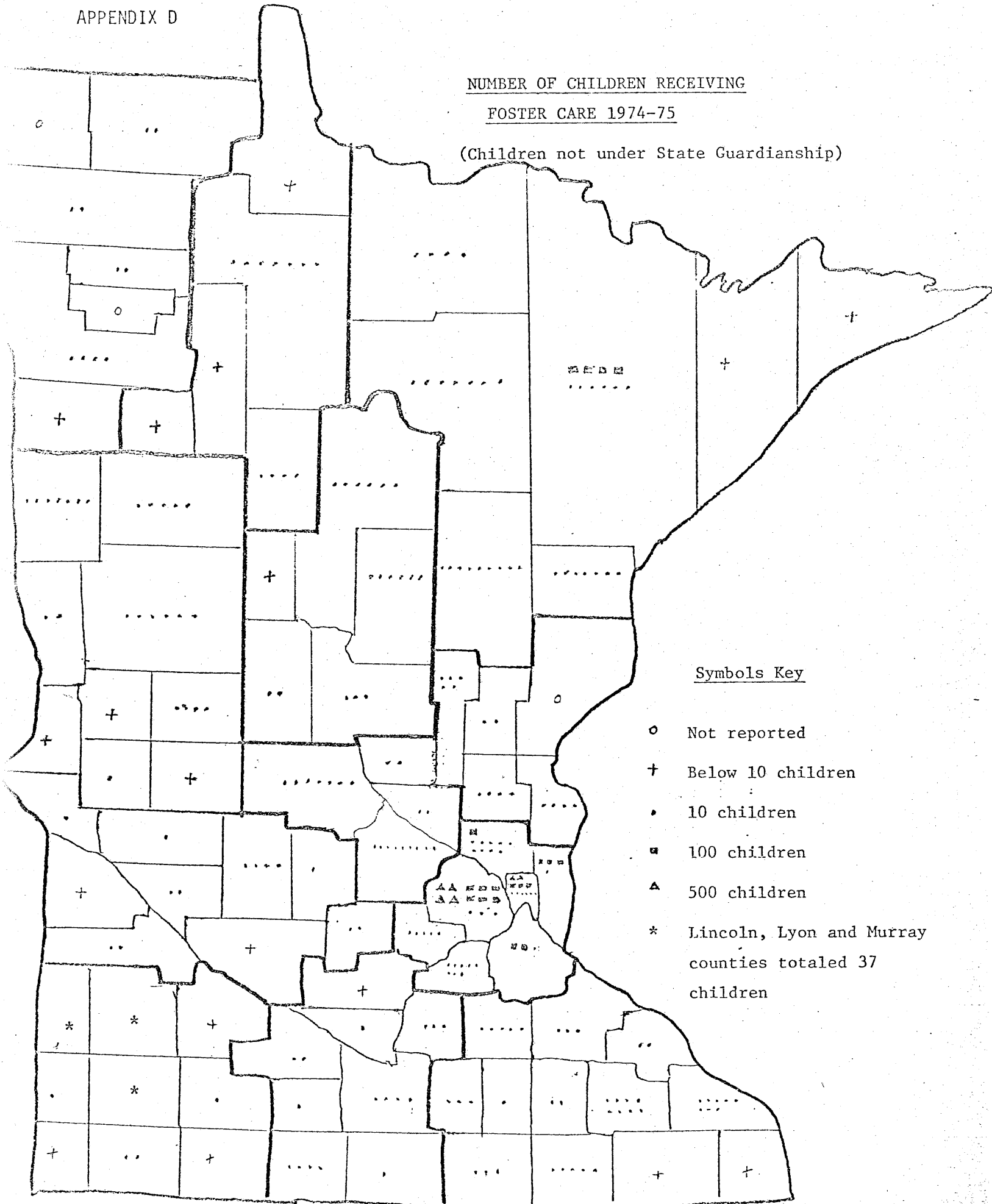
<u>Category of County</u>	<u>Number of Counties</u>	<u>Number of Social Workers</u>	<u>Number of MSW's</u>	<u>Amount of \$ Spent for Training</u>
(1) Counties with staffs of 5 or less workers	53	150	4	\$153,271.00
(2) Counties with 6 - 10 workers	18	134	7	\$101,896.00
(3) Counties with 11 - 20 workers	11	154	21	\$135,668.00
(4) Counties with 21 - 35 workers	2	57	10	\$ 13,229.00
TOTALS	84	495	42	\$404,064.00

*Excluding Urban Counties of Hennepin, Ramsey and St. Louis

<u>Category 1</u>		<u>Category 2</u>	<u>Category 3</u>
Benton	Marshall	Aitkin	Beltrami
Big Stone	Martin	Becker	Blue Earth
Chippewa	Meeker	Brown	Carlton
Chisago	Murray	Cass	Carver
Clearwater	Nicollet	Clay	Crow Wing
Cook	Nobles	Freeborn	Itasca
Cottonwood	Norman	Lyon	Kandiyohi
Dodge	Pennington	Mille Lacs	Olmsted
Douglas	Pipestone	Morrison	Stearns
Faribault	Pope	Mower	Washington
Fillmore	Red Lake	Otter Tail	Wright
Goodhue	Redwood	Pine	
Grant	Renville	Polk	
Houston	Rock	Rice	
Hubbard	Roseau	Scott	
Isanti	Sibley	Sherburne	<u>Category 4</u>
Jackson	Steele	Todd	Anoka
Kanabec	Stevens	Winona	Dakota
Kittson	Swift		
Koochiching	Traverse		
Lac Qui Parle	Wabasha		
Lake	Waseca		
Lake of the Woods	Wadena		
LeSueur	Watsonwan		
Lincoln	Wilkin		
McLeod	Yellow Medicine		
Mahnomen			

Sources: DPW Merit System Computer Print-Out of County Welfare Department Personnel by Classification, June 1976; and Chart of County Staff Training Expenditures, October 1975, through June 1976, from the DPW Staff Development Office, December 17, 1976.

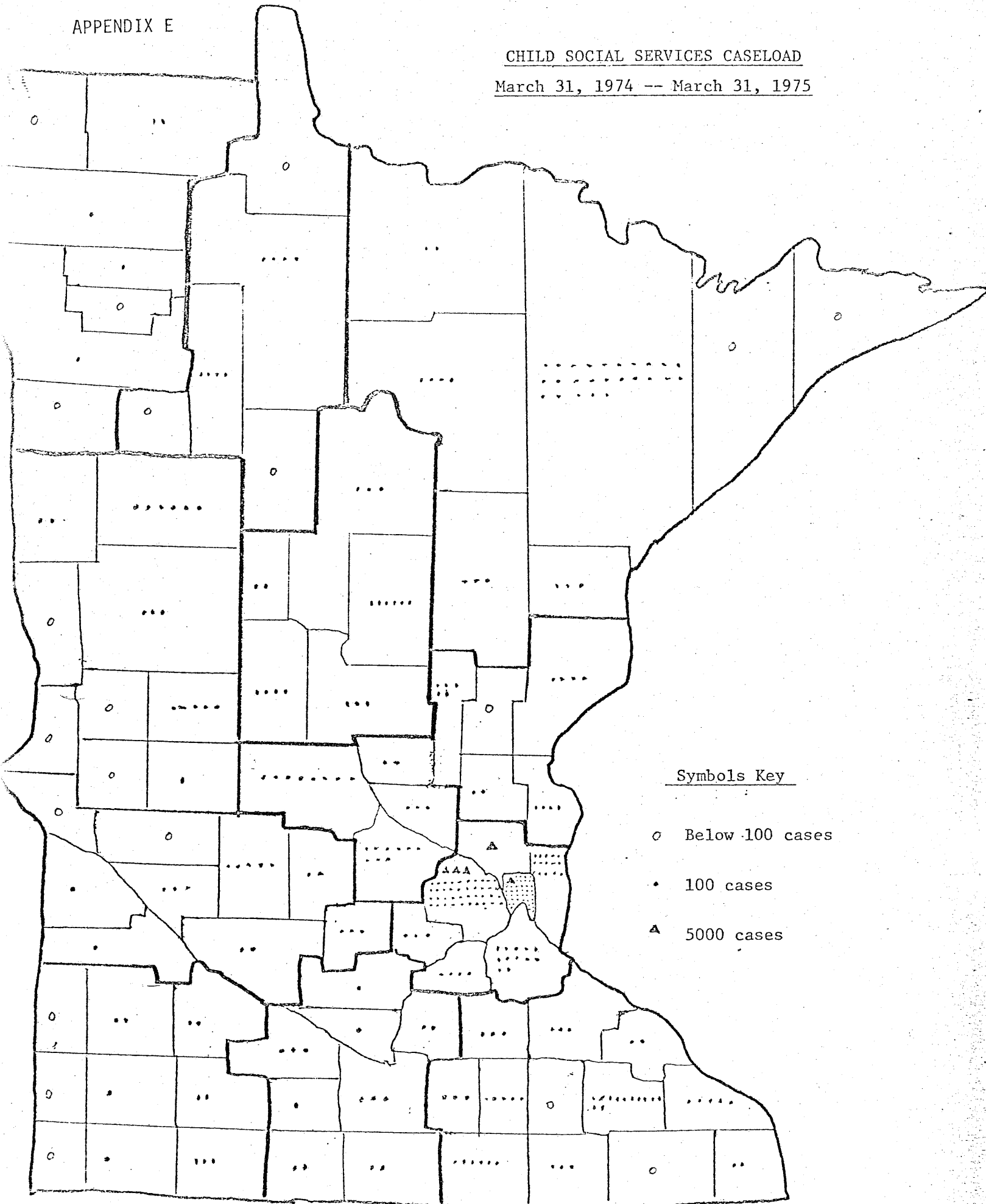
(Children not under State Guardianship)



APPENDIX E

CHILD SOCIAL SERVICES CASELOAD

March 31, 1974 -- March 31, 1975



A Profile of Populations Under 18
and Child Social Services Caseloads for Outstate Counties

APPENDIX F

	Total # of social workers	Total # of population under 18 (1970)	Total public agency child social services caseload as of March 31, 1975	Average % of children under 18 emerging on a child social service caseload in a county system
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Region 1

Kittson	1	2,355	18	0.8
Marshall	3	4,965	106	2.1
Norman	1	3,302	23	0.7
Pennington	5	4,604	117	2.5
Polk	8	12,434	140	1.1
Red Lake	1	2,188	28	1.3
Roseau	3	4,434	188	4.2
Total	22	34,282	620	12.7 $\bar{x} = 1.8$

Region 2

Beltrami	12	9,039	422	4.7
Clearwater	4	2,849	389	13.7
Hubbard	5	3,665	92	2.5
Lake of the Woods	1	1,415	35	2.5
Mahnomen	2	2,315	58	2.5
Total	24	19,283	996	25.9 $\bar{x} = 5.2$

Region 3

Aitkin	6	3,785	346	9.1
Carlton	11	10,718	237	2.2
Cook	2	1,200	43	3.6
Itasca	13	13,506	368	2.7
Koochiching	5	6,600	230	3.5
Lake	2	5,382	63	1.2
St. Louis	138	76,390	2,512	3.3
Total	177	117,581	3,799	25.6 $\bar{x} = 3.7$

Region 4

Becker	7	9,383	610	6.5
Clay	6	15,875	216	1.4
Douglas	4	7,894	458	5.8
Grant	1	2,459	28	1.1
Otter Tail	8	15,757	261	1.7
Pope	3	3,853	115	3.0
Stevens	2	3,841	73	1.9
Traverse	1	2,322	56	2.4
Wilkin	2	3,594	74	2.1
Total	34	64,978	1,891	25.9 $\bar{x} = 2.9$

	Total # of social workers	Total # of population under 18 (1970)	Total public agency child social services caseload as of March 31, 1975	Average % of children under 18 emerging on a child social service caseload in a county system
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Region 5

Cass	9	5,798	314	5.4
Crow Wing	15	12,291	591	4.8
Morrison	7	11,204	314	2.8
Todd	7	8,300	387	4.7
Wadena	3	4,693	162	3.5
Total	41	42,286	1,768	21.2 $\bar{x} = 4.2$

Region 6

Big Stone	2	2,855	60	2.1
Chippewa	4	5,284	277	5.2
Kandiyohi	11	10,530	71	0.7
Lac Qui Parle	2	3,877	120	3.1
McLeod	4	9,757	251	2.6
Meeker	4	6,775	168	2.5
Renville	5	7,767	215	2.8
Swift	5	4,815	88	1.8
Yellow Medicine	4	5,108	144	2.8
Total	41	56,768	1,394	23.6 $\bar{x} = 2.6$

Region 7

Benton	4	8,568	156	1.8
Chisago	4	6,588	385	5.8
Isanti	5	6,295	225	3.6
Kanabec	3	3,644	71	1.9
Mille Lacs	8	5,701	474	8.3
Pine	8	5,958	377	6.3
Sherburne	8	6,915	301	4.4
Stearns	19	37,814	831	2.2
Wright	14	15,891	919	5.8
Total	73	97,374	3,739	40.1 $\bar{x} = 4.5$

Region 8

Cottonwood	3	5,224	162	3.1
Jackson	2	4,995	320	6.4
Lincoln	-	2,880	56	1.9
Lyon	7	8,743	163	1.9
Murray	-	4,850	110	2.3
Nobles	5	8,712	142	1.6
Pipestone	2	4,671	80	1.7
Redwood	3	7,470	233	3.1
Rock	2	4,237	55	1.3
Total	24	51,782	1,321	23.3 $\bar{x} = 2.6$

Total # of
social workersTotal # of
population under
18 (1970)Total public
agency child
social services
caseload as of
March 31, 1975Average % of
children under
18 emerging on
a child social
service caseload
in a county system

<u>Region 9</u>				
Blue Earth	11	15,983	348	2.2
Brown	6	10,543	324	3.1
Faribault	2	7,339	168	2.3
Le Sueur	2	8,062	177	2.2
Martin	4	8,409	164	2.0
Nicollet	2	8,296	116	1.4
Sibley	3	5,716	105	1.8
Waseca	2	6,135	305	5.0
Watonwan	2	4,675	112	2.4
Total	34	75,158	1,819	22.4 $\bar{x} = 2.5$
<u>Region 10</u>				
Dodge	2	5,031	57	1.1
Fillmore	3	7,658	93	1.2
Freeborn	10	13,569	593	4.4
Goodhue	3	12,538	319	2.5
Houston	2	6,793	213	3.1
Mower	8	16,361	270	1.7
Olmsted	17	31,744	1,221	3.8
Rice	6	14,245	282	2.0
Steele	4	10,009	453	4.5
Wabasha	4	6,367	205	3.2
Winona	7	14,305	511	3.6
Total	66	138,610	4,217	31.1 $\bar{x} = 2.8$

Findings

On the average, 3.3% of children out of a population under 18 emerge on a child social services caseload in a county welfare system.

The median is 2.85%.

On the average, Regions 1, 6, 8, 9, and 10 fall under this median and Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 fall above this median.

Sources of Data

DPW Merit System Computer Print-Out of County Welfare Department Personnel by Classification, June 1976.

DPW Publication on Trends in Child Social Services Caseload, Five-Year Period 1971-75.

United States Census Report on Age by Race and Sex for Counties, 1970.